

# Teachers' Perceptions of Using Language Games

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## ARTICLE INFO

### Article history:

Received: 23/12/2019

Revised: 27/12/2019

Accepted: 02/01/2019

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### Keywords:

Teachers, perceptions, language game,  
Muhammadiyah, school

## ABSTRACT

This paper focuses on analyzing teachers' perspective of using language games. The subjects were eleven English teachers who teach at Muhammadiyah junior and senior high school located in Surabaya. They were taken by using proportional stratified random sampling. The details were seven from Muhammadiyah junior high schools and four from Muhammadiyah senior high schools. This research took one English teacher from each school. The research instruments were questionnaire and interview. Based on data analysis, it gathered several results; first the teachers prefer non digital language games. Second, if they apply language games in pre teaching, they become as "a bridge" to the new topic being discussed. When the teachers hold language game in the post teaching activity, the purpose is to check the students' comprehension. The teachers agree that language games give positive insights toward the students in learning English. However, these also bring some problem – the need of using L1 for students to understand how they run the language games and to win the game.

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## I. Introduction

Language learning needs an effort which is carried out not in the short period. It takes a long process to make students as language learner to be able in the target language. Thus, language learners must have strong motivation to keep it on track. Games are possible way to boost their concern on language learning [1] Furthermore, as in [2] they feel entertained when their teacher use language games in English classroom. According to [3] using games in the process of language teaching-learning is not restricted for any language level; it helps students to feel comfortable and more confident in acquiring a new language.

The explanation about the language games fits to what Krashen's idea of succeed in second language acquisition. He states that he affective filter hypothesis consist of three aspects namely motivation, self-confidence, and anxiety [4]. When English classroom is motivating and comfortable, indirectly the students will be less anxious and confident to be the best.

Besides knowing what the benefits of language games can bring, teachers should know type of language games which are suitable for their classroom. Whether the games is adjusted to 21<sup>st</sup> century era, where technology is very undeniable needed to support daily activities or in form of the non-digital ones. Speaking of technology, it becomes a trend in education. Some researches [5] and [6] indicate that it plays significant role in education. Technology can be the learning media which make students become active and improve students' skill in English.

The combination between technology and language learning produce many forms namely, digital games, digital magazine, learning management system (Edmodo, Canvas, Schoology, etc), social media (Youtube, Whatsapp, Facebook, and so on). Digital game in language learning context means games which are related to an electronic gadget, computer, netbook, internet connection, software, and application [7]. The examples of digital game in language learning are Kahoot, The English

Minnits, Quizlet, Hot Potatoes, Duolingo, and many more. Teachers can modify features in technology tools which are not designed as digital games. Hence they can be applied as the language games in the classroom without neglecting the characteristics such as fun, rules, goals, competition, interaction outcome, fantasy, and safety [8].

The second type of game is non-digital language game. This game is the opposite of digital language game. It does not need and depend on technology tools to run the games. Mostly they use the things like paper, whiteboard, pen, card, and etc., but sometimes they do not need any kind of props; the games are Simon Says and Careless whisper. In Simon Says, teachers just ask the students to do what they say, it practices their listening skill.

Games are one of several strategies and methodology that teachers may use in teaching English as foreign language. Games are regularly utilized as short warm-up exercises or when there is at some break in the classroom or in the post teaching phase. A game ought to be viewed as the core teaching and learning process. It means that it should be applied in all stages, starting from pre teaching, whilst teaching until post teaching stage. This shows that the games are well design to students. Students will be engaged in pleasant activity and they do not feel that through games the teacher indirectly recall teaching material [9]

This paper is aim to analyze what the English teachers in Muhammadiyah junior and senior high schools of Surabaya view toward language games and to find out what they experience toward the implementation of Language game.

## II. Method

It was a descriptive research which analyzed the data from participants. By applying proportional stratified random sampling, twelve out of twenty two schools were chosen as a sample of group of Muhammadiyah junior and senior high schools, these twelve schools (as the respondents) were divided into the following strata:

- Four senior high schools
- Seven junior high schools

Each school sent one English teacher to be a participant to fill in the survey. The participants were asked to answer the survey which consisted of two parts. Part one referred to personal information and part two was about teachers' perspectives toward the implementation of language games in English classroom. In part two, there were items in the closed-ended questions and ten items in the form of five-point likert scale questionnaires. To get validations toward the responses, interviewed was held.

## III. Finding and Discussion

Based on the questionnaire results, first it can get some data about the type of games which mostly the teachers like to run. Surprisingly more than fifty percent they prefer non digital language games. According to the teachers, they think digital games are about technology. For them technology is complicated to be employed at the classroom. It needs a little bit long preparation and it takes time. The bad side of applying digital games is technical matters such as internet connection, blackout, and computer error. [10] Found that some researches also indicated similar barriers in the context of using video games in the classroom. So it can be synthesized that the main reason why they decide to use non digital game is practicality. By using non digital game in English class, they will be free from the obstacles which are mostly occurred in taking digital games.

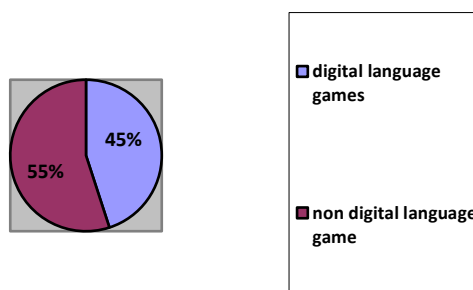


Fig. 1. Type of language games

Second data is about the language games' problems in English as foreign language classroom. The data show that using first language to explain the instruction about the language games and students speak in their first language are problematic ones.

As it is known that through game basically to make students are being able to interact with students and teachers and become fluent in having communication [2]. Of course the communication itself actually should be in the target language being learned – English. However, the data illustrates a few teachers see the class is noisy not as a big issue. For the teachers, the games are motivating strategies which attract students' attention toward the lesson. The responses from the students make the class a live even though this can be categorized as noisy. Language game has the characteristic of game in general, competition. Getting enthusiastic for competition in the context and culture of Muhammadiyah schools in Surabaya is a kind of reflection of Indonesia as a democratic country. It is little different from Oman's classroom context, a quite classroom is one among several ways to show students' discipline and obedience [11]

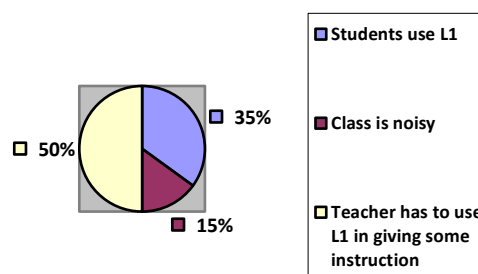


Fig. 2. Problems in language games

Third data is about language game preparation. All respondents, English teachers in SMPM and SMAM (Muhammadiyah junior and senior high schools) around Surabaya, declare that they plan what kind of language game before the class begins. They avoid the spontaneous game inside the English classroom. Dobson in [12], suggests that teachers should make comprehension preparation for the game. They should know game regulation and plan how to direct conversation during or following the game.

Forth, it reveals that mostly they use language games as a warm up in pre teaching activity before the main one begins. Apparently, the students in [13] have the same opinion related to the game as the warm up in English class. They chose Bingo and Hangman to be the two favorite starters. As the starters, it means the duration is not long, in other word game should be short. Dornyei in [13] suggests a short stimulating game as a warm up act.

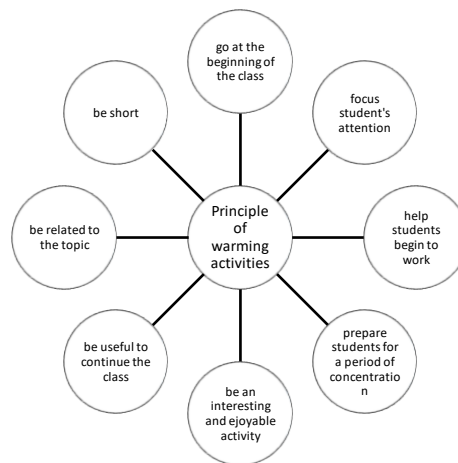


Fig. 3.Aspects to be considered as warm up activity taken from [13]

Locating a language game as a warm-up act should be considered the elements as it can be seen in fig.3. According to one of several Muhammadiyah English teacher who takes a language game as warming up activity, she explains that she does it because she wants to give a ‘picture’ about the topic to the students and also to get her students’ attention.

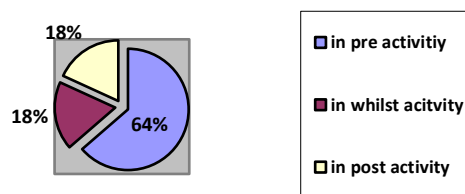


Fig. 4.language games

The position of those who put language game as closure are in the second rank. Some deliver the cause, it is to review teaching material in a fun way. Several strategies are available to create an effective lesson closure [14] and [15]. These strategies not only help facilitate learning of the content of the lesson, but also allow the lesson to be seen as an integrated whole. Strategies which teachers use to achieve closure include:

- Summarizing what has been learned by having the students discuss in pairs or small groups. Proposing several questions to be answered.
- Reviewing important key points.
- Relating to the objective (s) of the lesson
- Making a closure into a game
- Pointing out links between the lesson and previous lessons.
- Showing how the lesson relates to students' real-world needs.
- Walking around to take a note about students' difficulties
- Praising students for what they have accomplished during the lesson

From these statements, it can be inferred that the use language games at the end of the English classroom in Muhammadiyah junior and senior high schools at Surabaya are creative and breaking monotonous way in wrapping up the English lesson.

The last question for the respondents is about teachers' view toward the ten benefits of using games in English classroom. None of them see language game have disagreement with the advantages of language games.

Table 1. The Benefits of using Language Games

Statements	Percentage
Language games decrease stress	91
Language games build a supportive circumstance	100
Language games are such amusement activities	100
Students can practice their receptive and productive skills through language games	82
Students can apply language forms	73
Language games bring real life context	90
Language games strengthen teacher-student relationship	100
Language games become the ice breaking of usual routine language teaching	100
Language games develop communicative competence	82
Language games lift up shy students to be active	82

The statements of the table 1 are adopted from [3]. He did a research about the benefit of using digital games in language learning context then he got the same result like this research. He gave a recommendation toward English teachers in East Gezira Locality to design and implement sufficient language games.

#### IV. conclusion

From research finding and discussion, it can be summarized as follow; first the teachers like using non digital language games. Second, if they use language games in pre teaching, they become as “a bridge” to the new teaching material. When the teachers have language game as closure, the purpose is to check the students' understanding. The teachers agree that language games give some benefits the students' skills in English. Instead of having the good vibes from language games, these kinds of game also bring some problem – the need of using L1 for students to understand how they operate the language games and to conquer the game.

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